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RHEA EVALYNN ASHLEY
The First Prince Charming

PRINCE CHARMING

A PLAY
IN A PROLOGUE AND THREE ACTS

BY
W. B. EWER

Second Edition, Enlarged

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BY

WILLIAM BROOKS EWER

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no 1

Dedicated to
RHEA E. ASHLEY
The First Prince Charming

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MORTALS.

PRINCE CHARMING.

HAROLD, *Companion of the Prince.*

KING RUFUS, *Father of Rosamond.*

GRAUMARK, *a Robber Chief.*

HAL,	}	<i>Robbers.</i>
MARK,		
KARL,		
NICK,		

PAGE to King Rufus.

QUEEN BRYNHILDA, *Mother of the Prince.*

GENEVIEVE,	}	<i>Court Ladies.</i>
BEATRICE,		

QUEEN ETHEL, *Mother of Rosamond.*

ROSAMOND, *The Sleeping Beauty.*

WITCHES.

SCHRECKMUTH.

DUNKELMARTH.

WRACKMA.

FAIRIES.

MERLINA, *the Fairy Queen.*

TIPHAINÉ.

ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

ECHO.

Court Ladies, Robbers, Pages and Fairies.

PRINCE CHARMING.

Prologue.

Scene. A Witch's Cave Schreckmuth, Dunkelmarth and Wrackma discovered.

Schreck.—Sister, tell us of the times.

Dunkel.—The serpent's fangs are crooked and
His tongue is split.

Schreck.— What means the sign?

Wrack.—That we must work or die before
The set of sun.

Schreck.— Where lies our work?

Dunkel. and Wrack.—With Rosamond.

*A vision of Rosamond appears at the back of the cave.
She carries, in a basket, some flowers which she scatters upon the ground during the next speech*

Schreck.—Accursed damsel, art thou still alive?

Take heed, for e're the night thou shalt be dead.

My life depends on evil; thou art good;

And goodness doth obstruct my evil deeds.

Aye! scatter flowers everywhere you go.

Make the world glad with smile and ringing
laugh.

Thy time is short. Each smile and gentle deed

Is like a deadly blow to all my works.

Therefore thou diest.

The vision disappears.

A dog barks without

Schreck.—Garm barks. See who's outside the
cave.

Wrackma goes to the entrance of the cave.

Wrack.—A stranger in the habit of a page,

Seeks conference with us who dwell between

The earth and regions of unhappy souls.

All the witches laugh.

Schreck.—Let him come in.

Enter Page.

Page—What evil place is this?

Schreck.—Nay, answer me. Why hast thou come to us?

Page—I only serve the King.

Schreck.—King Rufus?

Page—He.

Schreck.—We will not deal with thee. Where is the King?

Page—He waits without the cave.

Schreck.—Let him come in.

Enter King Rufus.

King—You withered hags who scorn earth's sober ways,

And read the heart's of men as from a book,
I pray you tell me what I wish to know.

Dunkel.—We know thine errand. Art thou then so poor

In knowledge that thou com'st to us to learn
Of things forbidden to mankind? Oh fie!

King—Have done and get to work; for I'm made sad

By idle murmurs buzzing in mine ears.

I know not whence they come, but still they say
That on this day my Rosamond shall die.

Schreck.—Seek not to know the future; 'tis forbid.

King—To me but not to you. Therefore proceed.

Schreck.—Then look on things that thou art loath to see.

Queen Ethel and Rosamond appear at back of the cave turning a garland of flowers

Schreck.—Know'st thou those women?

King—Yes, the Queen, my wife.

And Rosamond, my well beloved child.

Schreck.—Hark to their words.

Queen Ethel—

Hyacinths for constancy,

Violets for love,
 Lilies speak of modesty,
 Daisies tell of courtesy:
 All the virtues from above
 Hidden in the flower's language
 Bring us joy as we go
 Wheresoe'er the flowers grow.

Rosa.—Sweet mother dear, whence came that pretty song?

Ethel—'Tis one thy poor old grandma taught to me

Full twenty years before thou saw'st the light;
 And I have treasured it until this day
 And tell it thee to keep thy thoughts from guile.
 Thy fifteenth year will die away tonight.
 Thou art no more a child, but woman grown,
 And all thy thoughts will take on sterner moods.

Our childish sorrows lightly fly away.
 And leave no scars to mar the morrow's joy.
 But when our childhood's gone, we learn too soon

That every grief will warn us of the next.

Rosa.—Mother, have no fear for me;

All my life is jollity.
 All my days are one glad song;
 Merrily I trip along
 With no heed for care or sorrow,
 Ever welcoming the morrow.

The vision of Queen Ethel and Rosamond vanishes.

King—There's nothing to affright me in that scene:

My fears were vain.

Schreck.— Then listen to the doom.

This day sweet Rosamond will learn to spin.

Dunkel.—This day the spindle tears her lily hands.

Wrack.—And from the wound she dies.

King— Impossible!

There's not a distaff throughout all the land.

Schreck.—There is, behold.

A spinning wheel and distaff appear in the middle of the cave.

King.—That wheel is many miles from Rosamond.

What harm can come to her from such as that.

Schreck.—Mark well the rest and tremble if you must.

For sure as day turns into night,
As sure as months and years take flight,
As sure as foxes nightly prowls,
As sure as angry dogs do growl;
Before the nightingale will cry,
Thy daughter Rosamond shall die.

Schreckmuth descends into the earth with the wheel and distaff.

King.—Your childish arts prove that my fears were vain,

And all my time with you has been misspent:

My daughter Rosamond may die today,

For who knows when his life will pass away?

Still in your incantations there is naught

To prove she may not live for fifty years.

Wrack.—Remain awhile: there is still more to see.

An apparition appears. Schreckmuth spinning, Rosamond sitting beside her.

Schreck.—

Our laughs may ring,
The merry birds sing,
For now 'tis Valentine's day:
And maids must spin
Their lovers to win
While others go on their way.

The wheel she turns,
The tattered heart burns,
Her lover has gone away.
So bring the spade
And bury the maid:
'Tis long past Valentine's day.

Rosa.—Is't true a maid must learn to spin
Before she win a lover?

Schreck.—Learn soon, my dear a heart to win:
You ne'er may find another.

Rosa.—Then teach me how to turn the wheel
And how to use the spindle.

Schreck.—And while you spin and turn the reel
With love thy heart I'll kindle.

Rosa.—

But stop I pray and tell me why
I'm feeling weak and giddy?
And what is this foul sight I spy?
My hand is torn and bloody!

Schreck.—

The humming of the spinning wheel
Makes all thy senses dwindle.
No more we need to turn the reel:
Her hand has touched the spindle.

Her days are done,
Her life is run,
Her soul has flitted away:
So bring the spade
And bury the maid:
'Tis long past Valentine's day.

The apparition vanishes.

King—What you may ask in payment for your
farce

Demand of me and I will pay it you:
But hope not to disturb my even ways
With simple tricks unworthy of a man.
Reserve such things for simple minded folk,
The gaping boor, the sentimental child:
While I shall always hold myself to blame
Because I sought enlightenment from you.

Enter Merlina.

Merlina—All you have seen will surely be,
But have no fear: believe in me.

The wicked Schrecknuth will this day
Use all her arts your child to slay.
But her dark acts will not avail
For stronger powers will prevail
And hosts of fays from fairy land
Will presently at my command
Turn that foul death which now you fear
To peaceful sleep of hundred year.
Then for a space the witches three
Will laugh and sing and dance with glee:
But when the hundred years are past
Their joy and laughter will not last.

ACT I.

The Departure.

Scene I. An open heath at night. Schreckmuth discovered. Wind, rain, lightning.

Schreck—Six and one do seven make:
Tarry thou or come too late.
Who walks abroad to-night?

Thunder. Enter Dunkelmarth.

Dunkel—One who's born to break our fate:
One who hates the witches' mate:
One as cunning as the weasel;
One who'll blast our works of evil.

Schreck—Let him not approach too near.
Summon sister Wrackma here.

Dunkel—Sister, where-so-e'er thou art
In the city's busy mart,
In the loathsome toad's embrace,
In the desert's lonely place;
Leave what work thou hast at hand,
Hasten to the witches' band.
Sister Schreckmuth bids me call;
Haste thee what-so-e'er befall.

Thunder and lightning. Enter Wrackma.

Schreck—Welcome sister, whence comest thou?

Wrack—From dismal swamp where frogs do
croak

And pestilence is bred.

Schreck—Come hither.

Wrack—Why?

Schreck—To work.

Wrack—For evil's good?

Schreck—'Tis so.

All—Sisters three in council sitting;

Bats are whizzing, whizzing, whizzing;

All the plagues of earth invoking;
 Babes are choking, choking, choking.
 Dunkel—Sisters, I am cold with fear;
 Something says our foe is near.
 Wrack—Something says 'tis but in vain.
 All our power is on the wane.
 Schreck—Like a cat you're mewling, mewling.
 Let us all be up and doing.
 Wrack—Here he comes.
 Schreck—Who comes?
 Wrack—Prince Charming.
 All—All the Furies blast him, blast him.

Enter Prince Charming and Harold.

Prince—What says the clock?
 Harold—It has just struck twelve.
 Prince—I heard it not.
 Harold—Prince, you are sad, and brooding on
 your ills.
 You take no heed e'en of the passing time.
Fire bursts from the ground in the midst of the witches.
 Look there!
 Behold a sight fit to unnerve the strong.
 Three withered hags have burst from out the
 ground.
 Now Prince, your sadness must have taken
 flight:
 Who thinks of fancied ills in danger's sight?
 Prince—The fear that's on thee only makes me
 laugh,
 And laughing I have cast away my fears.
 Let's speak to them: perhaps we'll find them
 mild
 And gentle as the harmless cooing dove.
 Harold—You do it, Prince, for if they speak to me
 Methinks I'll find my courage in my heels.
 Prince—Goodwives, I pray you, tell me your
 abode?
 Schreck—In church-yards where the dead do
 walk

And phosphorescent fires play.

Prince—And tell me what you're doing here to-night

When others seek the shelter of their homes?

Dunkel—Cooking plagues to blast thy life.

Prince—Your lives and mine are now so far apart

No plagues of yours can do me any harm.

Wrack—Beware the words in idle moments spoken.

Remember us when all thy hopes are broken.

Schreck—In the sleeping palace walls.

Danger lurks through all the halls.

Those who journeyed to that place

Lie to-day in death's embrace.

All Three Witches—One, two, two and two;

Makes the witches' number true.

Thine, thine, thine and mine,

Leave out one and that makes nine.

Schreck—Sisters, be dumb.

Our work is done.

Harold—Prince, let us go; for such unholy work

Affrights me sore and chills me to the bone.

Prince—Not so: for I would question these again.

Pray tell me of the dangers that you say

Do lurk throughout the sleeping palace halls?

Three Witches—Riddle me once, riddle me twice,

Riddle again and that makes thrice.

Prince—Let riddles go, and let me know at once

The place where stands the sleeping palace walls.

The fire is extinguished and the witches vanish.

Harold—Hold, Prince! for see, the dames have
flown away,

And where they sat is naught but vacancy.

Let us be gone; this is unholy ground,

And I'm worn out with crossing of myself.

Prince—Aye, cross thyself until thine arms be
numb:

That will not stop the chatter of such dames,

Whose words are idle and whose deeds but
tricks

Beneath the notice of the truly wise.

'Tis such as these who waste their precious
lives

A'telling tales that never seem to end,

And asking riddles that no answers yield.

But see, the dawn peeps o'er the eastern hills,

And tells us that another day is near.

Put on more cheerful thoughts without delay;

Let rosy morn drive nightly fears away.

Ereunt.

*Scene II. A Wood in First Groove. Enter Merlina
and Tiphaine.*

Mer.—Welcome Tiphaine: approach thy queen
and speak.

What gentle errand summons thee abroad?

Tiph.—According to thine orders, loving Queen,
The Sleeping Palace has my special care.
There Rosamond, thy godchild holds her sleep,
While I with fragrant blossoms scent the air,
And whisper gentle words beside her couch,
To sooth her slumbers and bring happy dreams.
Since yesterday I've travelled round the world
And plucked the fairest blooms for Rosamond.
These poppies placed upon her smiling lips
Will lock her in a sweet reposeful sleep.
This herb from Italy will cause her heart
To simulate the ocean's rhythmic waves;
And this pink flower make her dream of love
Until the hour of her awakening.

Mer.—Thou hast done well. 'Tis near a century
Since Rosamond first fell into her sleep.

A hundred years ago when Rosamond

Was from an infant blooming into youth,

The wicked Schreckmuth tried to cause her
death,

By throwing over her a cruel spell.

But I, her godmother, with gentle arts

Have changed the death to sleep of hundred years.

The time is near when Rosamond must wake:
And to that end some youth of spotless life,
Kind, brave and just, must rouse her from her sleep;

Or else the will of Schreckmuth must prevail.

Tiph.—My Queen, in times like these when
through the sleep

Of Rosamond and all her family,
The land is now beset with every ill,
Lives there a man with all those qualities?

Mer.—Yes, there is one: a lad of noble birth,
Whose mother holds the sceptre of this realm.
Should he, by his own will, elect to brave
The dangers that beset the one who tries
To reach the place where Rosamond is hid,
The fays of fairy land must use their arts
Against the skill of Schreckmuth and her mates
Whose vengeful natures love not what is good.
Not many days has Rosamond to sleep.
So go, Tiphaine, and keep her slumbers deep.

Exeunt.

Scene III. Garden of Prince Charming's palace.

Wall at back. Queen, Genevieve and Beatrice discovered with Ladies singing and dancing.

Ladies (*singing*). Youth is the time to be merry
and jolly;

Gather we roses and fling them away.

Out on thee, misery, welcome Sir Folly:

Dance and be merry the live long day.

Why do we care for age and its sorrow,

Why should it fright us? Let's frolic to-day.

Now all is bright, we've no care for the morrow:

Dance and be merry the live-long day.

A Lady (*solo*)—Under the trees in the gloaming
of evening

Colin there told me his love for a maid.
 Surely 'twas me whom he meant when he murmured
 "Truly my love for her shall never fade."

Ladies—Come to the fete and be merry and jolly:
 Gather ye roses to deck out the bride,
 There will reign laughter and music and folly,
 Though in the future grim care betide.

Queen—Sweet ladies, thanks, I love to watch your sports

Although I'm past the age for gambolling.
 But when I see you at your merry games,
 My heart returns to my loved days of youth,
 And, for the time, I feel as gay as you.
 Now would I dance; but age brings with it ills
 That stop the measure found in youthful blood.

Genevieve—Dear Queen, our mirth seems but a mockery,

When all the land lies steeped in bitter woe.
 The tales that come to us from day to day,
 Are sad enough to melt the hardest heart,
 Within our castle walls we're safe from harm;
 But o'er those walls there comes the plaintive cry

Of orphan starving at our very doors,
 Of mother left a widow in her youth:
 And to us who are happy in this court,
 Come sounds of war with all its bitter woes.
 And shrieking agonies of loathsome plagues.
 No sound of love, no voice of charity,
 To still the beating of our aching hearts.

Why should we dance amid such misery?

Queen—Sweet Genevieve, give o'er such doleful thoughts,

And with your queen be happy while you may.
 Why should the griefs of others give us thought
 When we have plenty and can dance and sing?
 Be thankful you are not like those who starve,

And give no thought to wars, to griefs, to
plagues.

But look! Adown the slope of yonder hill,
Some whirlwind comes to jar against our mirth,
Look with your younger eyes and tell me, maids,
If this shall bring us fright or jollity?

Genevieve—'Tis Harold, the companion of the
Prince.

With fingers clenched and eyes stretched open
wide,

He runs as if the Furies followed him.

One cannot say that we should feel affright,
For fear with him is an inheritance,
And that which makes us laugh oft' makes him
quake.

Queen—Stand all aside and let him tell his tale.

Enter Harold running.

Harold, thy coming in unseemly state,
Fills all our thoughts with wonder and alarm.
Mayhap some scene of misery or woe,
Has been the parent of a state like thine.
Lay bare the thoughts that make thee quake
with fear,

And tell me if the Prince is well or ill.

Harold—The Prince was well, when last I saw his
face;

And that was but a brief half hour ago.
I'll truly swear in body he is sound;
But of his mind I cannot speak so well.
For days I've found him sullen and morose,
And brooding on some ill, the depth of which
I've tried my best to fathom, but in vain.
I trust Your Majesty will counsel him
To change the tenor of his evil ways;
For if his brooding is not soon put off,
The court will lose its richest ornament.
And, furthermore, I pray Your Majesty,
To make him cease his nightly wanderings:
For, prowling as he does at ghostly hours,
Will surely be his ruin if not mine.

Last night, returning from an aimless walk,
 We met three withered hags, who spoke to us
 And scared me so the wonder is I'm here
 To tell of all the dangers we have passed.
 For surely, Queen, the omen of last night
 Reads danger to the Prince, if not to me.

Queen—Your words astound me. We must guard
 the Prince,

For should he die the court would pass from us.
 But tell me, Harold, why these nightly walks?

What does the Prince when others are asleep?

Har.—He mounts some lonely hill, stares heaven-
 ward;

Then spreads a scroll of parchment on the
 ground

And with a stylus punches it with holes.

See, Queen, here is the scroll; look well thereon.

This truly is the work of one who's mad.

Queen—A parchment pierced with many little
 holes!

'Tis as you say: the Prince is surely mad.

Alas! that I have lived to see the day,

When my own son, whom I have reared and
 loved,

Shall walk the earth the specter of a man.

The voice, that should be rival of the birds,

Grown harsh and cracked: the warm, caressing
 hand,

Unsteady, cold and loosing all its sense;

The eyes that flash like jewels in his head,

Uneven, dull and restless in their gaze.

Har.—Take heart, dear Queen, 'tis not yet time to
 grieve;

For, if his malady be checked in time,

The Prince will be as sound a man as I.

Genevieve—Behold how wise our Jack-a-Napes
 has grown.

The wisdom of the schools is here outdone.

If Harold's malady be checked in time

Perhaps he'll be as wise as is our Prince .

Beatrice—Hold, Genevieve: you surely do him wrong.

His love for our dear Prince has turned his head,
And though there is no doubt his head is wrong,
I'm all but certain that his heart is right.

Genevieve—When Nature doth another Harold make

I hope there'll be more balance of his parts.

Har.—Look, Queen, here comes the Prince.

Queen. Stand all apart,

And with some merry game beguile the time.

Look not upon your queen, lest you behold
Her grief gush forth, and like a cruel flood,
Sweep over you and drown your merriment.

Enter Prince.

My gentle son, art well this merry day?

Prince—Aye, sound and well in every single part.

There is no laggard blood in me to-day,

But energy that forces me to work,

And search all science for the good of man.

Queen—Work is unfit in states like thine.

Rest is the part for such a malady.

Prince—What malady?

Queen—'Tis ever thus, my son. When mind is weak

The one afflicted knows not his disease.

Prince—Why, mother! Do you think that I am mad?

Queen—Thought oft' goes wrong, and if I said I thought

'Twould be unwise. Nay, son, I surely know.

Prince—Then let me know the cause of thy belief,

That by the duty that I owe to thee,

I may forbear the thing that gives offense,

And cause no pain to my dear mother's heart.

Queen—Look on this scroll. Behold a childish prank.

What man of sense would stoop to such an act?

Be counselled by a wiser head my son;

And turn your thoughts to deeds of worthy men.

Prince—What fool has had the pleasure of your ears

Or has some knave by lying poisoned you?

This scroll, you see, is a celestial chart

On which I keep a record of the stars.

No more of this good mother. 'Tis enough

That I should spend my time in fighting knaves

Who make a hell of our beloved land.

I cannot and I will not turn aside,

To wage a war against a silly fool.

Queen—Alas, 'tis worse than I at first believed.

Star gazing is beneath thy royal state,

And therefore shows a mind that's gone astray.

Leave off such things and be more like thy kind;

Be gay, not sad; instead of brooding spend

Thy time among the ladies of the court.

Prince—Good mother, there are Jack-a-Napes enough,

I'll give them all to these fair ladies here,

And they may sport with them from morn till eve.

But leave me with my science and my books

That I may grow in knowledge day by day.

To serve my country as becomes a prince.

My sadness, lady, is not what it seems:

For at such times my mind's engrossed upon

The poor oppressed subjects of this realm,

Who need the care that I alone can give.

And when I'm brooding I am building schemes,

To bring more comfort to this stricken land.

Accept me, gentle lady, as I am,

And leave me in the pathway I have sought.

Queen—This madness must be checked. Attend me well;

For by the duty that thou owest me,

I will insist, nay, force thee to my will.

Sweet Genevieve, approach. Behold, Sir Prince,

A maiden fit to make a royal bride.

With her learn Cupid's ways—you'll find them sweet—

While others read thy books and con the stars.
 Prince—To thee I owe the duty of a son,
 And will repay the debt with interest true.
 Come, Genevieve, lets play at love awhile,
 And do our best to make young Cupid smile.

Har. When I behold sweet Beatrice
 My heart begins to flutter;
 And when she leaves my presence—

Bea. Oh, cease that silly mutter.

Har. Pray tell me, pretty Beatrice,
 The cause of my disorder
 When e'er thou com'st a-nigh me?

Bea. Thy stomach's out of order.

Har. Nay, teach me, haughty Beatrice,
 The way to win thy heart.

Bea. The better will I love thee,
 The farther we're apart.

Prince—I fain would learn love's language that I
 may

Converse with thee along our flowery way.

Genevieve—Love's language is not learned, it
 must be known:

But first to love must one have fully grown.

Heart speaks to heart with language all its own;

When love is dead then is its language flown,

Prince—Then love was never meant for such as
 me.

My place is not beside a cooing maid,

When o'er the land, in every wretched home,

The sore oppressed are crying for my aid.

Gen.—Pray say no more; nor with thyself make
 strife,

For thou hast known love's language all thy
 life.

Queen—How does our pair of lovers?

Prince. Lady, well.

Queen—Stand not so far apart my loving one—

And stare not on the unresponsive ground.

Methinks that you have both gone off asleep

Like Rosamond behind the castle wall.
 Surrounded by a prickly briar hedge.
 Draw near and I will tell the tale to you.

Some evil ones on Rosamond
 A cruel spell have wrought:
 And while she sleeps with war and woe,
 Our lovely land is fraught.

Sweet Rosamond has kept her sleep
 A hundred years they say:
 And round her is a briar hedge,
 To keep the world away.

Those who would fain awaken her,
 To force the hedge have tried:
 But caught within the briar bush,
 In misery have died.

Beware the sleeping palace halls,
 Near briars never tread:
 Nor try to wake sweet Rosamond,
 For fear you will be dead.

Thus says the tale. Now lovers sport again.
 Prince—Nay lady, there is better work to do.
 I go to rouse sweet Rosamond from sleep.
 Adieu, good mother: Genevieve, good bye.
 To find the sleeping palace will I try.
 Queen—Thy madness grows apace. Hast thou
 forgot
 The duty that thou owest me, my son?
 Here I entreat thee stay: 'tis my command:
 None go that way but meet grim death's hard
 hand.
 Prince—Whichever way I turn the galling bonds
 Of duty bind and lacerate my heart.
 The strongest duty must take precedence:
 And now a stronger duty calls me hence.
 Queen—Then if the mother can't control her son
 The orders of the queen shall be obeyed.

(*To Ladies*) Go all of you at once and bid the
guards

Lock fast the gates and suffer none to pass.

Exeunt Ladies, Genevieve, Beatrice and Harold.

Now, son, I have thee caged.

Prince—Not so, good mother, for I shall not stay.

Bars may be drawn if one but find the way.

Enter Merlina.

Mer.—Never fear the pride of greatness.

Choose thy path and walk serene.

All that's good will come from goodness:

Choose the right, from ill refrain.

To the fountain in the garden,

Hasten at the fairies' call:

There thou mayst escape thy prison

Through a breach within the wall.

*Merlina touches the wall with her wand. It falls to pieces
and the Prince passes out of the garden.*

ACT II.

The Briar Hedge.

Scene I A fairy glade Moonlight Enter Robin.

Robin—Ho, ho! my fay: whither away so fast?

Enter Tiphaine.

Tiphaine—No more in haste I fly, for I am here;
To dance and play with all my sisters dear.
The queen and all her train come here tonight;
Because at twelve the moon shines clear and
bright.

Robin—My errand is the same as thine:

To dance and play I do incline;

And so I'll stay and play with thee.

But tell me what thy name may be.

Tiphaine—My name's Tiphaine, the fay of gentle
deeds.

My duty is to dry the orphan's tear:

To sooth the pains of unrequited love:

And scatter dew on dying soldier's face.

Robin—My name is Robin Goodfellow, sweet fay:

But call me only Robin if you may.

Tiphaine—I know thee as I know myself.

Thou art a roguish, thieving elf.

I've heard of thee this many a day:

Thou art a plague; that's what they say.

Robin—They slander me who call me so;

For to be good is all I know.

I try to ease the housewife's trust,

By helping her to sweep and dust.

I dip her candles, melt her wax;

I churn her milk and spin her flax.

Tiphaine—But all the same you're full of
mischief.

You spin the flax, but break the distaff.

And when the housewife wakes from dream,

She finds that thou hast skimmed her cream.
 Her household, too, is in a mix,
 Because of Robin's silly tricks.

Robin—Forbear, sweet fay, to slander me,
 For in thy favor would I be.

But hold! The flash of fire-fly
 Says plainly that a fay is nigh.
 Let's call to her and give her greeting,
 And thus begin a merry meeting.

Tiphaine—Fairy, fairy, tell me rightly,
 Will the moon shine dull or brightly?

Echo—Brightly.

Tiphaine—In our games and mirth and chaff,
 Is it best to weep or laugh?

Echo—Laugh.

Tiphaine—To our fete the fays are running.
 Art thou coming, coming, coming?

Echo—I am coming, coming, coming.

Enter Echo

Robin—Well met, fairy. What's thy name?

Echo—Echo. From the hills I came.

There in solitude I dwell,
 Mocking those who love me well.

Robin—Thou art welcome to our fete.
 Join the throng and choose thy mate.

Merlina's court will soon be here:
 Hark, the fays are drawing near.

Music Enter Fairies singing, and Merlina.

Fairies—Shine down on our gambols, silvery
 moon.

Thee do we invoke in fairy tune.
 While mortals are dreaming,
 Thy soft rays are beaming:
 Shine down on our gambols, silvery
 moon.

Merlina— A hundred years have passed away
 Since on a foul, unlucky day,
 The cruel Schreckmuth cast a spell
 On Princess Rosamond.

And while the spell keeps her asleep,
 The orphans and the widows weep;
 In every home is care and pain,
 And wars infest the land.

She sleeps within the castle tower:
 Her maidens sleep within the bower:
 The soldiers sleep upon their arms,
 The king upon his throne.

And all await the happy time,
 When from a far and distant clime,
 A prince shall come and with a kiss
 Awaken her from sleep.

Then will the orphan dry his tear:
 The widow shall have no more fear;
 Then care and pain shall fly away,
 The land return to peace.

Tiphaine—

Merlina, hear my bitter cry:
 When will the hundred summers die?
 When will the prince from far away,
 Awaken Rosamond?

Mer.—The time is very close at hand.
 Prince Charming is upon his way,
 To find the sleeping palace hall.
 But dangers lie before the lad,
 At every turning of the road.
 Here, robbers lie in wait for him,
 There, cruel witches cross his path:
 But we, the fays of fairy-land,
 Must give to him a helping hand.

Echo, thou shalt go before,
 To show the Prince the way:
 Tiphaine, remain beside the lad,
 To guard him night and day.
 The rest may make his pathway soft
 With daffodil and buttercup;
 And Robin, merry little elf,
 Thou mayst trip the robbers up.

And now away without delay,
 I've given you your warning.
 Be merry all what e'er befall
 And revel 'till the morning.

Exeunt singing as before.

Scene II. A Forest. Graumark and Robbers discovered sleeping. Enter Schreckmuth

Schreck—May those who dwell in realms of darkest night

Fill all your hearts with envy, malice, hate.
 Arise and strike: rob everything you find;
 But on our enemy turn first your mind.

Enter Wrackma and Dunkelmarth.

Schreck—Welcome, sisters: do your parts.

All Three Witches—In a ring the sister thus

Curse the man who curses us:

Trouble him who gives us trouble;

May your hearts with malice bubble.

Dunkel—Sister Wrackma, bind the spell.

Wrack—It is bound up very well.

Schreck—Wrackma, Dunkelmarth, away,

While our spell these robbers sway.

Wrack and Dunkel—Sister Schreckmuth, we are gone.

Witches strike the robbers and exeunt.

Hal.—Who struck me?

Mark.—No one: it was I who was struck

Karl.—Have you lost your senses? I tell you some one has struck me.

Nick.—Somebody struck me, an' let the one who says "nay" feel the lump on my head.

Graumark—Have done, an' hark to me. While I slept one of you scurvy knaves saw fit to strike me. I know not which it was nor do I care: but I will lay my staff upon you all, and, when I am through, the guilty one will have received his deserts. (*He strikes the robbers*)

Hal.—No, no, it was not I.

Mark.—Good master, I did not strike.

Karl.—I did not lay my hand upon you.

Nick.—(*Drawing his sword.*) Hold off, an' if you strike me I will run you through.

Grau.—By all the devils in the pit I do believe 'twas thou who struck the blow. But I will pardon thee if thou canst find the one who'll say he did it.

Nick.—Hal, tell the chief 'twas thou, an' thou do'est not, I will make holes all over thy body.

Hal.—I stand between a drumming and my death. I'll take the drumming. Master, 'twas I.

Grau.—(*Striking Hal.*) Take that, and that, and that, and live in expectation of the same to-morrow. An' now away. Take toll of all you meet: an' bring me what you find by set of sun. But hold, I had a dream last night.

Hal.—And I.

Mark.—And so did I.

Karl.—I had a dream to.

Nick.—I dreamed that Prince Charming was on his way to find the sleeping palace.

Grau.—'Tis the very dream I dreamed.

Nick.—And more: I saw three witches in my dream; who told me that, should the Prince succeed, thy power in the land would wane, and thee and all the faithful members of thy band would perish.

Grau.—Then let the Prince turn back or meet his fate. Sharpen your knives and be ready for him.

Mark.—Master, why should we fear? The briar hedge is firm and none can pass it. But yesterday I saw a bird light on it and perish in the instant.

Grau.—Shut fast thy mouth, and do as thou art bid. An' now away: an' he who lets Prince Charming pass alive, look to his safety for he is as good as dead.

Exeunt.

Enter Queen, Genevieve and Beatrice.

Queen—Beneath the friendly shade of spreading trees,

Let's pause and give full rein to all our grief.

Gen.—Who has more cause to grieve than Genevieve,

Whose every thought was for the Prince's good?

The man who dared to wrong the Prince wronged me:

And should one slay him, he would slay me too.

Beatrice—The grief of Beatrice will keep pace with thine,

For all affections ties bind me to thee.

Be gay. Then will thy Beatrice laugh with glee:

But when the pains of grief shall bow you low,

Then all my joy is drowned in bitter tears.

Queen—How can you know a mother's aching heart?

There is no grief on earth so sharp as hers.

I've reared my son to be a shining light

Among the greatest rulers of the world,

And at the moment when the time is ripe

I find that madness has o'er-topped his mind.

Enter Harold

What tidings of the Prince?

Har.— Small tidings, Queen.

Not long ago I saw a little speck

Ascend the summit of a distant hill,

And hide itself upon the other side.

I was so anxious to behold the Prince,

That all my senses told me it was he:

And yet, I have no right to say as much.

Queen—Keep up the search, and follow every clue;

He must be found before the fall of dew.

Exit Harold.

Bea.—Here comes another; let us question him.

Enter Karl

Queen—My good man, have you seen my wayward son?

You'll know him by his wild and restless gaze,
Unsteady gait and tremor of the hand.

Gen.—Not so good sir; if on your way you've seen
A comely yorlh with bearing of a man,
A lad as rich in mind as graybeard seer;
Pray tell us quickly where he may be found.

Karl.—Soft, my gentle ladies. You have given
me two pictures to choose from, a wise man and
a fool. If I find either I will send him to you an'
let you do the choosing. An' now a charity for
my service.

Queen gives him a coin.

Karl.—'Tis not enough; so much for the fool:
double it for the wise man.

Genevieve gives him a coin.

Karl.—'Tis well: Ladies adieu.

Queen—Hold, my good man; it is the Prince we
seek:

If thou shouldst find him bring him to us here,
And we'll reward thee with a royal gift.

Exit Karl.

What means the man by leaving in such haste?

Gen.—His action is enough to rouse alarm.

I fear he'll bring no good to our sad cause,
For when he heard you speaking of the Prince,
His eyes did open and his lips curled up,
As if the music of your voice and words,
Had set in motion his malicious cords.

Bea.—Look, you, my Queen; the man is here
again,

And with him is another of his kind.

Gen.—Let's have no more of them but go our way.

Queen—Nay, let us hear what they have got to
say.

Despise no foul thing that may cross thy path
Lest it refuse to yield the good it hath.

Enter Karl and Graumark.

Grau.—What knavish trick art thou playing me? Thou broughtest tidings of the Prince, and then thou ledest me to a woman.

Karl.—Master, I told but the truth a moment ago; they said they sought the Prince.

Grau.—Ladies, I have no more knowledge of the Prince than you have. An' now a bounty for the information.

Gen.—I cannot think that you deserve our alms:

But live in hopes of rich and royal gifts,
If by the night you bring the Prince to us.

Grau.—That is not the way I deal with my friends. I ask alms like a gentleman, and, if I get them not that way, I take them like a boor.

(*He tries to take the Queen's purse.*)

Queen—Away! I am the Queen.

Grau.—Well met, sister: I am a sovereign also an' my realm is larger than thine, for it lies wherever I may be. So pay thy tribute like a royal lady: an' thou doest not I shall take it by force of arms.

Queen—(*Throwing him her purse.*) Take it and go.

Grau.—Farewell sister. I will return thy bounty by permitting thee to depart from my kingdom in peace.

Exeunt Graumark and Karl.

Bea.—My Queen, what think you of the base canaille?

Queen—We'll think of them as little as we can,
For deeds like this do not enrich the mind.

Let's further on, search moor and field and wood;

Adventures here will never bring us good.

Exeunt.

Scene III. Another part of the forest, in sight of the briar hedge. Enter Merlina.

Mer. Fairies, fairies, one and all,
Come at Queen Merlina's call.

Make the forest rich and gay,
 Drive the hornet far away:
 Ope' the petals of the flowers,
 Nourish them with gentle showers.
 Make the cricket chirp with glee:
 Loose the fragrant honey bee.
 Tune the voice of thrush and wren;
 Lock the snake within its den:
 Banish all in disarray,
 For the Prince comes here today.

Enter Robin

Robin—Queen Merlina, Royal maid,
 All thine orders are obeyed.

Snakes are hidden, forest ridden
 Of small things that give offense.

Mer.—Thy task is only half complete.

Remain in some obscure retreat,
 And save the Prince if danger may
 Confront him when he comes this way.

Exit Robin.

Enter Tiphaine.

Mer.—It is easy to explain

What has brought thee, sweet Tiphaine.

By thy presence I can tell

That the Prince is here as well.

Tiph.—By the fairies' aid and cunning

To the briar hedge he's coming;

With him all of us rejoice,

Following sweet Echo's voice.

Mer.—We may well rejoice my friend.

When his journey's at an end.

Guard Prince Charming on his way,

While I make his pathway gay.

Exit Merlina.

Tiph.—To guard the Prince I will be nigh,
 Invisible to mortal eye.

And all I do shall be his gain;

If he should thirst I'll send him rain,

If weary and for rest he cry

I'll look for moss where he may lie;
 I'll do small things to help his fate
 For little things help on the great.

She goes up.

Enter Prince.

Prince—Alone among these woods how sweet to
 roam,

Free from the noisy strife and pomp of courts.
 Here find we all God's works without disguise,
 All perfect and in order as he planned.
 Here mystery on mystery unroll.
 With more to come beyond our strictest ken.
 Here may we learn the littleness of man,
 By dipping into nature's mighty store:
 For while her secrets to the mind unfold,
 We die with half the story still untold.

Enter Harold.

Har.—Prince, I have found you.

Prince— So it seems my friend.

Har.—Your royal mother begs you to return,

And sends me here as her ambassador.

My gracious Prince, I hope you will comply,

For your wild ways distress our loving queen,

And me, and Genevieve, and all the court.

Behold, my Prince, how many you disturb;

Obeys the queen and bring us peace again.

Prince—Fie. Harold, fie. I've sworn a royal oath

To serve my country for its people's good.

Then wouldst thou tempt me to betray the
 trust?

Oh, Harold: I had better thoughts of thee.

Har.—You cannot serve your people when you're
 dead.

And death will claim you if you reach the
 hedge.

Prince—Then if it is to be I'll cry "well done."

And if success should crown me I'll rejoice.

If all goes well great things will come to pass:

When Rosamond awakes a mighty host

Will rise with her and crush out evil things
Which now distress the land that we must
serve.

The stake is worth the trial, friend of mine;
And should I fail in purpose none shall say
That in my duty I went far astray.

Har.—If you insist then must I stay with you,
And humor all your ways till comes a change
That will restore you to your proper mind.
Prince—Then humor me, my well beloved friend.
And thus continue to my journey's end.

Enter Schreckmuth.

Schreck.—I've thrown a curse upon your head;
If you advance you will be dead. *Exit.*

Har.—This is the dame we saw that frightful
night.

She follows you about to do you harm.
Beware, Prince, how you tempt your fate.
Turn back before it is too late.

Prince—Content thyself with humoring my
whims.

And take no heed of any stranger cry.

Enter Dunkelmarth.

Dunkel.—Your journey's idle: it will end in woe.
Exit.

Prince—This is the second; we'll await the third.
Enter Wrackmar.

Wrack.—This is the last; I'll say no more.

Remember those who went before. *Exit.*

Prince—Like dogs afraid to bite these creatures
try

To frighten us with bluster and with noise.
We'll take no heed of them but go our way.
Why friend! is't true thy courage is all spent?
Or am I looking with a jaundiced eye,
That sees things not as they would really be;
But as a sickly mind translates the signs,
And turns what should be fair to ugliness?

Har.—Prince, I am weak. A sickness comes o'er
me

And though 'twas fear of death that brought it
on,

I'd gladly die that such an ill might end.

Prince—I know the remedy for such complaints:

Another fright will drive this one away.

Look not for danger through a telescope;

But wait until you find it close at hand.

Now let us on. But hold! Who comes this way

With stealthy creeping tread, as if they sought

To steal unseen on unsuspecting prey.

Har.—There is no doubt of danger now, my prince,

You will admit the time has come for flight.

Prince—We do not know that they are seeking us.

So let us wait until we are assured.

Har.—Look, Prince! They press us close.

Prince—Stand where thou art:

Unloose thy sword and wait; keep both knees
straight;

And let thine eyes blink not nor stare abroad:

But look indifferent, as if thou think'st

The men who come are peacefully inclined.

Tiphaine—Robin, Robin, hear my call;

Danger will our friends befall.

Where the branches cast their shade,

Hasten, hasten, to my aid.

Enter Robin.

Robin—Now the fun begins in earnest:

'This is work as well as play,

We will make the robbers harmless,

When we steal their swords away.

Enter Graumark and Robbers

Prince—Your names and business with me gentlemen?

Grau.—My name is Graumark, and the rest

Have each a name, but that is naught to thee.

My business with thee will be soon dispatched.

'Tis simple, and may be explained at once,

Then will I leave thee to the birds of prey.

Prince—You mean that I am not to pass alive.

(*Robin and Tiphaine steal the daggers from the robbers.*)

Grau.—No matter what I mean, words are in vain;
And in my trade I have small use for them.

My argument's in dagger and in sword;
And with the backing of these lusty men,
We'll have the argument all on my side.

Prince—To pray for mercy of such hounds is
vain;

And so like hounds we'll treat you. Harold,
draw.

We'll get some sport e'en in our discontent,
And make a goodly fight although we die.

Grau.—The time is ripe, draw forth your blades
and strike.

Hal.—My dagger's gone.

Mark.— And mine..

Karl.— And so is mine.

Nick.—Which one of you has filched my trusty
sword?

Grau.—Strike, hounds, I say.

Karl.— We cannot strike, we're done.

Prince—Away, you dogs; for in a moment more,
I'll make you food for jackal and for crow.

Exeunt Robbers.

Grau.—The devil take them for a set of clowns.
But with my staff alone I'll end this work.

Robin holds his arm.

What weight is on my arm that holds it down?

What fever's in my head that makes it burn?

Now would I strike, but feeble as a child,

I cannot raise my hand above an inch

Prince—Why stand'st thou there, art thou afraid
to fight?

Or hast thou learned a lesson from Prince
Charming?

Echo—(*Calling without*) Prince Charming.

Prince—Who's calling me?

Echo—I'm calling thee.

Prince—Which way?

Echo—This way.

Prince—Thy voice is sweet as birds: if all the world

Should try to hold me back, I'd follow thee.

Echo—Follow me.

Exeunt Prince, Robin and Tiphaine.

Har.—The Prince was right, my courage has returned.

Now will I follow him o'er land and sea,

Through danger and through fire:

Nor pause until we reach the hedge of briar.

Exit.

Grau.—May all the curses of the damned light on the knaves who overthrew my plans. I'll after them to call them to account, and make them feel the power of my hand.

Exit.

Scene IV. The Briar Hedge. Enter Echo.

Echo—Thy pathway ends: the hedge is here.

Be strong and brave. Draw near, draw near.

Prince—(*Without*) Which way?

Echo—This way.

Enter Prince.

Prince—Now beats my heart with every breath;

Now leaps the blood into my brain.

At last we reach the journey's end,

And all I strived for is at hand.

Har.—Not yet the end, for we must pass the hedge.

Prince—Then we will at it now, I cannot wait.

Echo—Wait.

Prince—Again that voice resounding in my ear.

I've followed it thus far and yet I'm safe.

Through all the way it led me out of harm;

And now it bids me wait: must I obey?

Echo—Obey.

Prince—Like one who finds a sword that serves him well

And trusts in it thereafter, I obey.

Har.—Prince is it time, now shall we force the hedge?

Prince—Not yet I'll rest awhile.

Har.— So be it then.

Alone I'll venture through that none may say,
 "Our Harold's courage has all flown away."

He disappears through the hedge.

Prince—Wait, Harold, wait; the time is not yet ripe.

Har.—Oh, Prince, I'm caught, come quickly or I die.

Prince—Take courage, friend, I'll soon be at thy side.

The Prince tries to cut away the hedge with his sword.

Har.—'Tis useless, for my days are done:

My earthly pilgrimage is run.

Asunder soul and body fly;

Adieu, my Prince, for here I die.

Prince—Now has one passed who might have been

A credit to his race and kin.

Henceforth in heaven the angels may

Guide him along the royal way.

Enter Queen, Genevieve and Beatrice.

Queen—Quick, Genevieve, for I have found the Prince.

At last my son I have thee by my side.

Here on my knees I beg thee to return.

Prince—Good mother, Harold's life is passed away.

Queen—'Tis well: we may not grieve for all must die.

But thou art safe, for which the Lord be praised.

Behold the fate of Harold and be warned.

Return, my son, and make thy mother glad.

See how I kneel a suppliant to thee,

Behold I weep; canst thou withstand my tears?

Prince—My reason and my instincts are at war,
And inclination bids me yield to thee,
But I have come thus far upon my quest,
And at the very threshold of success
My ears must turn away from thy complaint.

Queen—Then out upon thee vile, ungrateful son.
Had I the power of witch or sorcerer,
I'd curse thee till thou reeked with loathsome
sores.

No more with gentle kindness will I try
To bend thee to my will,
But like a foe and traitor to the queen,
I'll make thee pay the forfeit with thy life;
And then proclaim thy madness to the world.

Gen.—Have mercy, Queen, all that he does is
right.

Queen—Beware, thou jade, if thou tak'st side
with him

Thy head shall fall to keep him company.

Enter Graumark, Robbers and Witches.

Bea.—Prince! look that way, more danger is at
hand.

Queen—Good gentlemen you have arrived in
time.

This man has proved a traitor to his queen.

The price of traitors shall be paid to you

If executioners you choose to be.

I'll give you gifts and you may go your way,

And boast to friends that you have slain a
prince.

Prince—Peace, lady, peace: thy love and reason's
flown.

Some fiend, with hellish arts has captured thee,
And of their jewels robbed thy mind and soul.

Grau.—I have no use for reason nor for love:
but jewels suit my taste. (*To robbers*) Now if
you wish to live get at your work; and this time
see that all your knives are safe.

Bea.—Think well before you act. This noble lad
Loves all the world and you among the rest.

Consider well before you do him harm,
 For you may hurt a friend instead of foe.
 Grau.—Now lads to work.

Queen— And make the business sure.

(The middle of the hedge turns to a bower of roses. The door of the sleeping palace is seen beyond. Merlina and Fairies in bower Fairies form two lines up and down the stage guarding a path for the Prince, to the door of the palace)

Merlina—

Sound the lute and crash the cymbol.

Raise the chorus loud and clear.

Fill the heart with golden promise,

At the close of hundred year.

Now the briars turn to roses;

All the way from harm is free,

To the palace where the princess,

Wrapped in slumber, waits for thee.

Close unto the palace portal

We have brought thee, now adieu.

Hasten to the sleeping princess.

Wake her and love's way pursue.

ACT III.

The Sleeping Beauty.

Scene. A Hall in the Sleeping Palace. Rosamond on a dais. King Rufus seated. Page. Lady in waiting. All discovered sleeping.

Enter Prince.

Prince—Where'er I go I find a mimic death,
That makes each chamber like a sepulcher.
The birds beneath their wings have hid their
heads
And all the mantles hang in sleepy folds
Against the wall.
E'en from the mice have joy and passion fled,
And holy stillness fills the halls with dread.
All these forget life's scars and seams,
While lost in the shadowy land of dreams.

Oh, blissful land of happy dreams.
Where all our fondest hopes take form:
Where sorrow dies and joy beams;
Where peace is found in fiercest storm.

Here father meets his buried son,
And mother finds her child again;
While parted lovers meet upon
The ways that lead from care and pain.

My pretty page with smiling face,
Dreaming of love and maiden grace;
If I should kiss you you'd declare,
You had the favor of your fair.
To you great king I'll talk of fight.
And you may dream that in your might
You're sacking towns ;or else I'll say
Great wrongs afflict us that you may

In dream revolve the problem o'er
To right our wrongs forever more.

He sees Rosamond.

But lo, but soft! What vision's here!
What beauty dawns as I draw near?
Bewitching maid, I'll talk of thee,
In hopes that thou may'st dream of me.
All that is thine rich charms impart:
Thy beauty hath ensnared my heart:
And that thou may'st increase my bliss,
Awaken with this heaven born kiss.

The Prince kisses Rosamond

Rosa.—What changing dream drifts o'er me now?

Prince—No dream so sweet as this I trow.

Rosa.—To waken would a sin beseeem.

Prince—Nay, love, this is no fleeting dream.

Rosa.—Then let me sleep and dream of thee.

Prince—Nay, wake and always live with me.

Rosa.—My greatest joy shall always be,

Asleep, awake, to dream of thee.

Prince—Hold back the hours that speed too fast,

For I have found my love at last.

Enter Schreckmuth.

Schreck.—The deed is done beyond recall.

Now death awaits us one and all.

Dies.

Enter Wrackma

Wrack.—Our curses have been all in vain;

She wakes from sleep and we are slain. *Dies.*

Enter Dunkelmarth.

Dunkel.—No use, for us to cry Wait, wait.

'Tis time to meet the witches' fate. *Dies.*

Rosa.—Quick, love and work with might and
main.

To bring them back to life again.

Prince—No leech's skill nor surgeon's art

Can to the dead fresh life impart.

From their sad fate this lesson take.
All evils die when virtues wake.

All the sleepers awake.

King—Who dares unbidden seek my presence
here?

Prince—My noble lord, 'twas love of all mankind
That made me leave my home and seek for you.
Could you behold the wretched land I serve,
The poverty, the sickness and distress,
That makes each man a foe against his kind,
You would not turn your angry frowns on him
Who bursts into your presence but to pray
For all your strength to drive our wrongs away.

King—A goodly youth and one that suits my
mind.

But of thy kingdom I am not advised.

Whence comest thou and tell me what's thy
name?

Prince—I'm called Prince Charming and my
kingdom lies

A little to the east beyond the hills.

King—Why, thou art mad; there lies no king-
dom there.

'Tis but a waste where wildest creatures dwell.

Prince—A hundred years has wrought a mighty
change,

And where the restless beast once roamed at
large

Great cities rise—Nay, 'tis the truth my liege.

Send forth your swiftest messenger and he

Returning will bear witness of the truth.

King—Thy counsel's good although I doubt thy
word.

Up page, away. Ride o'er the eastern hills

And bring me back a picture of the land

That lies beyond. (*Exit Page*) My lad, I love
thee well:

But should I find that thou hast come to me

With foolish tales that show thee to be mad,

Then must I, for the good of all mankind,

Enclose thee in a dungeon where you may
 Sport with the fiend of madness till you die.
 Prince—Pray wait until your messenger returns.
 I am so sure the page will serve my cause
 By bringing you a knowledge of my realm
 That I'll make bold to seek your daughter's
 hand.

Her heart is mine already. Is't not so?
 Rosa.—My heart, my mind, my soul, aye all of me,
 Is at thy bidding till the day I die.
 To love thee is a privilege beyond
 All other things the world can give to me.
 To be with thee my only joy in life
 To serve thee well a duty that I dread,
 Because my service falls beneath my love.
 King—Come, stand apart and cease this foolish-
 ness.

What, give my daughter to a lad who's mad?
 Prince—But, Sire, I pray—but list to me awhile.
 King—No, not a single word; mine ears are clos-
 ed.

For thou art mad until I learn the truth.

Enter Queen Ethel.

And now what will our queen and gentle wife?
 Ethel—I'm almost dazed with that which I have
 seen,

And know not if I'm mad or else bewitched.
 But now arising from my sleep I went
 To breathe the air; when from the rampart wall
 I saw a sight that shocked my very soul.
 For where rich fields and open plains should be
 A mighty forest stands and on all sides
 Cuts off our castle from the outer world.
 Each tree may hold a hundred rings within,
 And tangled weeds and vines conceal the
 trunks.

This is the work of fairy or of witch;
 Or else I'm mad with visions in my brain.
 King—Has all the world gone mad, or has the
 time

Made mighty strides within a single night?

I'll go and see this wonder for myself.

And, lad, take heed. If by the set of sun

No messenger returns to prove thy words,

I'll make my promise good and you shall lie

Within a dungeon till the day you die. *Exit.*

Ethel—My daughter Rosamond, what makes thee sad?

What evil thing has dawned to quench thy smiles?

Lady—My Queen, your daughter has a common ill

That all are subject to before they die.

A Prince from o'er the eastern hills has come,

And cast his eyes on her with love's intent,

And so bewitched her that her former life,

Is wiped away by all the joys that bring

A new existence in the realms of love.

Ethel—Then if the Prince is worthy of my child
She should be wreathed in smiles not courting
tears.

Rosa.—My happiness depends upon a page,
A flippant boy, who should he go astray,
Or linger o'er the smiles of some new love,
And not return from o'er the eastern hills;
Then father swears he'll snatch the prince from
me

And shut him in a dungeon till he die.

Ethel—Then let thy sorrow rest till set of sun.
Meantime be gay and frolic with thy prince.
Where is the lad?

Prince—My lady, I am he
Who dared to play the thief, and, while she
slept,

Crept to your daughter's side and stole her love.

Ethel—Methinks that both are thieves since
Rosamond

Makes no complaint against thy boyish act.

But come.

Until the sun has sunk within the west,

Feed on each other's smiles and be content.
 And as for me, I'll watch the eastern hills,
 And bring you tidings when the page returns.

Exeunt Ethel and Lady.

Prince—Now give me leave to bathe me in thy
 smiles

And let them wash away all trace of guile,
 So fitting me for services I owe
 To sweet and gentle dove like Rosamond.

Rosa.—On thee my smiles shall rain in constant
 showers;

But not to make thee good, for thou art so.
 If smiles can make us better, smile on me,
 And then, mayhap, I'll be as good as thee.

Prince—Thy smiles can make me brave to meet
 the fray,

That rages in the world from day to day.
 The smiles that tell of love within thee hid
 Will purify my soul, all vice forbid.
 And I made perfect, by example may,
 With darts of love smooth every rugged way.

Rosa.—I know not why I love you but 'tis true.
 Love's paths I blindly walk led on by you.
 'Tis sweet to follow when you lead the way:
 With you as guide the rugged roads seem gay.

Enter King.

King—I'm half amind to think the boy is right.
 If forests rise within a single night.
 Why not a city and a kingdom too?
 But mysteries like these twist time askew.

Enter Queen Ethel and Lady

Prince—What say you, madam, has the page ar-
 rived?

Ethel—Not yet arrived; but I have news for thee.
 Two ladies in a habit not our own,
 But of a foreign style, are at our doors.
 No squire and no page are in their train.
 And yet 'tis plain to see they're noble born.

Prince—No doubt they are two ladies from my court.

If so I trust your Majesty will speak with them.

King—Aye that I will, and gladly say I so.

Admit them. And my noble son-in-law,
For soon I hope to call thee by that name,
Stand by my side and help to make my court.

Enter Genevieve and Beatrice.

Arise, fair maids; and I will ope' my ears
To let thy words sink deep into my heart.

Gen.—Like beggars we have come to ask for
alms,

And pray for shelter through the chilly night.

King—We gladly grant you shelter nor will ask
The reason why you left your home without

A page or squire to keep you company,
But of your home I fain would question you;

Where does it lie; how far removed from here?

Bea.—Beyond the eastern hills our castle stands.
Within a land beset with every woe.

There thieves abound and every loathsome
plague.

While envy, brawl, rebellion rule the land.

King—And what hast thou to add to such a tale?

Gen.—All that she says is true, my noble lord.

There stands our Prince and he can testify
To every word my sister Beatrice speaks.

King—To you we give the freedom of our halls;

And for our bounty you may pay with smiles.

Look to them Ethel; give them all they need.

And spare no pains to make them feel at ease.

Genevieve and Beatrice go up with Ethel.

Enter Page.

Well Page, thou com'st too late; but say thy
say.

Page—My lord 'twas as you said: no kingdom
lies

Beyond the eastern hills, but barren wastes

Where beasts of prey abound and wage a war

With slimy snakes and even with themselves.
 King—Stop boy, thou liest; I have just learned
 the truth

Aye, drop thy head and let the crimson blush
 Paint all thy face an everlasting red.

Come now be brief: why did'st thou forge that
 lie?

Page—My king, I went not o'er the eastern hills:
 But on the way I met a noble dame,
 Who said she was a queen and bade me tell
 The tale that I have just set forth to you.
 Then bidding me return she fell and died,
 Saying "Prince Charming thou art surely
 doomed."

King—Know'st thou the dame of which the page
 relates?

Prince—My lord, that was the queen my dam.
 I beg and pray you'll say no more of her,
 But leave my sorrow to gnaw at my soul
 In silence while you go your merry way.
 For pity only sharpens sorrows edge,
 And makes it cut the deeper in our hearts.

King—Thy pleasure is our own, let's all be gay,
 For this is our Prince Charming's wedding
 day.

And Rosamond, be gay; the boy was right;
 You shall be man and wife this very night.

Ethel—This day of happiness is incomplete,
 And this betrothal nothing but a cheat,
 Unless our fairy godmother is here,
 To bless our daughter Rosamond's career.

Enter Merlina and Fairies.

Merlina—Kind friends, I come to close the play;
 And bless my godchild's wedding day.
 Your pardon if we've wearied you;
 Ring down the drop, and so adieu.
 But e'er you go this lesson take;
 All evils end when virtues wake.

The End.

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